

REMARKS

Claims 1-2, 4-9 and 12-13 have been amended. Claims 18-20 have been canceled. Claims 16-17 were previously canceled in an Amendment filed April 25, 2003. Accordingly, claims 1-16 are currently pending in the application.

PRIORITY

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's acknowledgement of the claim for priority and safe receipt of the certified priority document filed in a prior application.

35 U.S.C. §101

It is submitted that the claims, as amended, satisfy the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §101. It is submitted that the claimed invention produces a useful, concrete and tangible result. The Examiner is hereby invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if any further clarification is needed.

DRAWINGS

Figure 5 has been amended as required by the Examiner. A separate letter to the Official Draftsperson is enclosed.

35 U.S.C. §112

The claims have been amended to overcome the outstanding rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112.

35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Crawford. This rejection is traversed as follows.

The present invention is directed to a method for renting and charging a storage system to a user as recited in the claims. According to this method, the data storage system itself manages information of the state of use of its part units and has a use management table in a cache memory. Information of the use state is sent from the data storage system to a charging system by referring to this use management table.

On the other hand, Crawford discloses that customers can make a contract with backup service and they can use a remote data storage from a customer's PC via a data link by inputting their ID and password. However, Crawford does not disclose a method of renting and charging a storage system to users. In particular, Crawford does not disclose a data storage that itself manages information by of a use state of a disk drive by referring to a use management table storing information

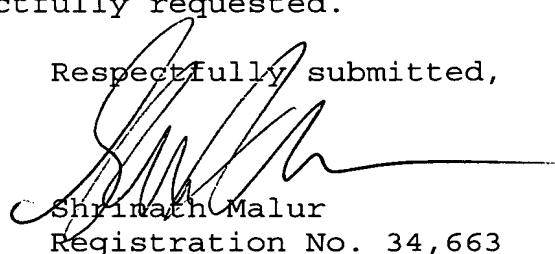
about the state of use of the disk drive. It necessarily
follows that Crawford also does not disclose or suggest how to
communicate information regarding the use state of the disk
drive to a customer's system.

As such, Crawford cannot realize the advantages of the present invention. In particular, Crawford cannot provide users with the advantage of obtaining time and cost information when they use a rental data storage system, as shown for example in Figures 8 and 9 of the present drawing. Therefore, effective renting and charging for the storage system cannot be accomplished by Crawford.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants contend that the above-identified application is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration and reexamination are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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